

**WEEK 8: APRIL 21-25**

Proverbs 9:10-12; 4:1-9; Psalm 139

God places an extremely high priority on wisdom—not knowledge alone, but knowledge applied. And the reference point for all wisdom in the universe is Him. When all of our decisions revolve around knowing and loving Him, they reflect the ultimate priority.

- What does it mean to “fear” God? How does that fear relate to wisdom?
- In what ways has godly wisdom protected you in the past? In what ways has a lack of godly wisdom exposed you to danger?
- What priority have you given to the pursuit of wisdom? Is it a conscious pursuit? Why or why not?
- What are the rewards for embracing godly wisdom? Are they always worth the cost?
- To what degree are you absorbed in learning God’s thoughts? How does He respond to those who seek His mind?

**WEEK 9: APRIL 28-30**

Psalm 3; 5; 7

Protection, favor, and deliverance. We are needy for all three, and God is our only hope for them. The good news is that we don’t have to figure out how to have them; we cry out to Him in helpless dependence, and He steps in.

- What people or situations in life intimidate you? Why? How does faith in God overcome those fears?
- What percentage of your “mental free time” is absorbed with concerns about your future? Would that percentage change if you were 100 percent convinced of God’s favor toward you?
- Is complete dependence on God a positive or negative condition? Why?

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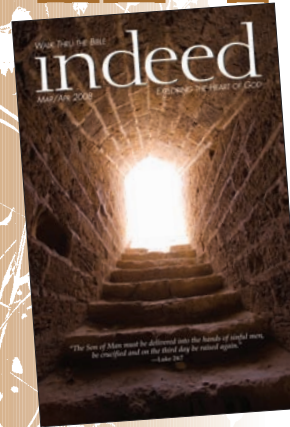
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*indeed* can be used not only as a personal devotional guide, but also as a teaching or discussion tool for small groups. The following questions will help you go deeper with each week’s readings, whether individually or in a group. More *indeed* resources can be found at [www.indeedmagazine.org](http://www.indeedmagazine.org).

**MARCH/APRIL 2008**

When we think of “wisdom” in the Bible, the book that usually comes to mind is Proverbs. It’s a rich collection of practical advice for a variety of life’s situations. But the wisdom of God can be found on every page of the Bible; it comes through not only in His dealings with Israel but also in His plan to redeem humanity through a Savior on a cross. That’s why, in this year’s theme of wisdom, devotionals are drawn from all parts of the New Testament and Old. The mind of God spans the ages.

**WEEK 1: MARCH 3-7**

Job 1; 13:13-19; 37; 38:1-21; 42:1-6

We are never more aware of our need for God’s wisdom than when life is confusing and discouraging. In all of Job’s anguish, that’s essentially what he sought: the mind of God. Eventually, he heard from God Himself. Until then, he did what wisdom always does. He trusted God anyway.

- In what ways does adversity bring out your true self? In what ways does it draw us closer to God?
- How tempted are you to mistrust God when bad things happen? Why is faith greatest when God is hardest to see or understand?
- Why does adversity tend to polarize people either toward or away from God? Which effect does it usually have on you?
- In what ways is it comforting that God is in control? In what ways is it unsettling? In which areas of your life are you most apt to try to maintain control?
- What conditions might cause you to question God’s sovereignty? What Scripture passages or stories restore your confidence in His sovereignty?

**WEEK 2: MARCH 10-14** Romans 6:1-14; 1 John 2:3-6

Wisdom, by the world's standards, is a matter of growing in knowledge and improving behaviors. In the kingdom of God, it's not an upgrade; it's a death and resurrection. We receive the mind of God by becoming new creatures.

- Why doesn't grace give us license to sin? What motivation do we have to flee sin if grace already covers us?
- What does it mean to live a resurrected life? How have you seen the resurrection at work in your own life?
- How would you describe your level of joy as a Christian? To what extent does the fact of the resurrection influence your joy?
- Do you see yourself as having been raised to new life? Why or why not?
- Do you agree that there's no such thing as an un-Christlike Christian? Why or why not?

**WEEK 3: MARCH 17-21** 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:16

The wisdom of the cross is foolishness to the world. The cross embraces humility, weakness, servanthood, and death—things the world usually avoids at all costs. Pursuing the wisdom of God therefore requires us to swim upstream in our surroundings.

- In what way might delayed gratification be a picture of the kingdom of God?
- Why isn't it possible to find God through human wisdom? How is the character of God displayed in His pursuit of us?
- Why do you think God hid His treasures in such humble vessels as Jesus and the cross?
- What does it mean to “experience the culture” of God's kingdom? Why is seeking spiritual depth a necessary part of following Jesus?
- Is it possible to really understand “what God has freely given us”? Why or why not?

**WEEK 4: MARCH 24-28** James 1

In terms of practical wisdom, James functions in the New Testament as Proverbs functions in the Old. It's a vital explanation of how faith is to be applied in real life. It even begins with an invitation into the divine mind: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God” (1:5).

- Have you ever experienced real joy in a painful trial? If so, how did your heart get to that place?
- What's God's plan for those who need wisdom? Under what conditions does He provide it?
- Have you ever asked God for wisdom without first committing to follow it? What was the result?
- In what ways does grace lift up those who are down? In what ways does it bring down those who are up?
- How can listening to God's Word without applying it be deceptive? What can we do to make sure it isn't?

**WEEK 5: MARCH 31–APRIL 4** Philippians 2:1-11; 3:12-14; 4:4-9

As the incarnation of God, Jesus expressed the Father's mind perfectly. The picture we get from His life is surprising—not what most would expect from the supreme being of the universe. He demonstrated humility in the extreme.

- Does wisdom apply more to our internal attitudes or outward behaviors? In what ways do attitudes shape behavior?
- In what ways have you sought to rise in the eyes of God by lowering yourself in the eyes of the world?
- Why do memories of the past tend to have a crippling effect on us? What does it mean to “forget” what lies behind? How can we do that?
- What is the key to being anxious for nothing? Is that even possible?
- How conscious are you of your mental diet? Why is it important?

**WEEK 6: APRIL 7-11** Proverbs 16

Making plans without reference to God reflects a serious lack of wisdom. God is extremely interested in the direction of our lives—from the motives and attitudes that get us started to the ultimate results of our steps.

- Is God more concerned with our motives or the outcomes of what we do? Why?
- Why is it unreasonable to expect God to be devoted to our plans when we're not devoted to His? How do our plans and His work together?
- Why is God so opposed to pride? What does it mean to humble yourself?
- Are there any ways in which you feel that you've missed God's plan? How do His promises reassure you?
- How much pressure does God put on us to find His exact plan? What happens when, with good intentions, we still misunderstand His will?

**WEEK 7: APRIL 14-18** Proverbs 16

God's values—the priorities He emphasizes in Scripture—should have a lot of influence on ours. In fact, when our words and our actions don't flow out of love, joy, and humility, we can be sure we are not in sync with His heart.

- How do you respond when your experience doesn't seem to line up with a promise of God? Which is a better indicator of reality?
- If you were to walk into God's presence, what expression would you expect to see on His face? Why?
- How easily do you respond to advice? to instruction? to rebuke?
- In what ways can words affect eternity—both positively and negatively?
- What's the difference between being honest about a bad situation and being negative about it?